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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

1. Summary: As the major Chinese-language Taipei dailies August 12 continued to provide extensive coverage of the water supply situation in Taoyuan and incoming Typhoon Sanvu, the centrist "China Times" carried news stories about Taiwan's military buildup and cross-Strait transportation on its front page. The "China Times" ran a banner headline on its front page that read: "[Squadrons of] Taiwan's indigenous cruise missiles will be formed." A second news story on the newspapers' front page was topped with the headline: "Minister of Communications and Transportation: both sides of the Taiwan Strait have reached a consensus regarding [cross-Strait] charter and cargo flights." The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, however, printed a wire service story on its page two, quoting the U.K.-based "Financial Times" as saying that "The United States will monitor closely the Chinese companies listed in the U.S. capital market." The newspaper also carried a news story on that page that quoted the Nobel-Prize winner for economics in 2004, Edward Prescott, as saying China's economic growth will hardly persist as its productivity is much lower than that of Taiwan, the United States and Japan.

2. Most Chinese-language newspapers editorialized on the water supply problem in Taiwan August 12, but a "China Times" column commented on the Iran nuclear program. According to the commentary, problems associated with Iran's nuclear program cannot be resolved if relations between the United States and Iran are not improved first. End summary.

"Resolution to Iran's Nuclear Program"

The "International Outlook" column of the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 500,000] wrote (8/12):

". Iran's nuclear program is in essence a matter concerning the conflict between the United States and Iran. The European Union (EU) is tasked with the responsibility of mediating and negotiating with Iran on the frontlines, while the United States just hides behind the EU and provides random comments. This situation is similar to the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula; namely, the United States is using the 'Six Party Talks' to deal with North Korea, but deep down, it is still a matter concerning the conflict between Washington and Pyongyang. .

"Pyongyang used to rely on Russia to maintain its security. In the aftermath of the Cold War, Russia turned its back on North Korea and no longer took charge of the latter's security. In the meantime, Washington did not [seize the opportunity to] befriend Pyongyang; instead, it suppressed North Korea all the more, to the extent that it almost tried to put it to death. For Pyongyang, the only way to maintain and sustain its regime at that time was to develop nuclear weapons. To put it simply, North Korea will never give up its nuclear program unless it gets assurances about its national security in the post-Cold War era. .

"The situation is similar in Iran. Iran's economic situation is much better than that of North Korea because it possesses oil resources. But the suffocating situation it experiences in international politics is no better than that of North Korea's. The suffocation comes from Washington's attempt to blockade Iran entirely, which has also sparked Iranian loathing toward the United States. When rumors had it in the international community that the United States would invade Iran following its war in Iraq, Iran felt the need more desperately to develop nuclear weapons to defend itself. When Washington decided not to end its suppression of Iran and showed the possibility of invading it anytime, could Iran safeguard itself just by relying on the EU's commitments? Can the EU really stop the United States if the latter wants to invade Iran? . Judged from this perspective, the problem concerning Iran's nuclear program can hardly be resolved if the relationship between the United States

and Iran are not improved."

PAAL